

British Colonies vol. 5.

THE
ORIGIN and CAUSE
OF THE
CONTINUANCE of the DISORDERS
IN OUR
EAST INDIA AFFAIRS,
AND THE
MEANS of RESTORING THEM.



L O N D O N,
Printed for G. KEARSLEY, No. 1, LUDGATE-STREET,
M D C C L X X I I.

ORIGINAL and COUNTER

OF THE

Col. Right Honorable Lord
SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

E R R A T A

In the dedication, for supervisor, *read* supervision, and
for pensioner, *read* partizan.

Page 2 line 2, for by their tacit indulgence, *read* by the
company's tacit indulgence.
P. 6, l. 3, for haram, *read* zenana.

I the address as well as subject, but
till within these few days, I have met none
amongst all the public writers, with whom
I could possibly converse in sentiments
and him only under a common name.
in a series of well written letters to Lord
North: My apology therefore must be for
sending it in the rude dress it now ap-
pears: This I can assure to your lordships,
it contains nothing but the most incontestable
truth.



T O
The Right Honourable LORDS
SPIRITUAL and TEMPORAL.

My LORDS,
I **HAVE** long wished for a better
pen than mine, to suit the dignity of
the address as well as subject, but
till within these few days, I have met none
amongst all the public writers, with whom
I could possibly concur in sentiments,
and him only under a fictitious name,
in a series of well written letters to Lord
North: My apology therefore must be for
sending it in the rude dress it now ap-
pears: This I can affirm to your lordships,
it contains nothing but the most incontestable
truth.

DEDICATION.

truth. However, as my mention of a noble lord, for the supervisor, may subject me to the suspicion of being a pensioner, I think necessary to declare in the most solemn manner, he is totally a stranger to it, nor have I any other view or design on my part, than the public good. I beg it may be observed, I have not proposed him to go with mere out-lines from hence, and to have a large discretionary power: no, my lord, it is the execution particularly of that plan, which I maintain must be laid here, or that country and this will feel the effects. It has been our misfortune to have been guided too much by councils from abroad, and our error to fall on expedients that can never produce a remedy. Where is the use of a direction or indeed, how is the word applicable, if every

DEDICATION.

every thing is to be submitted to their servants, or a supervision unlimited in it's power? To make the cause and means intelligible, has been all my aim; and to the wisdom of your most august assembly, are submitted the weak but honest efforts of,

My LORDS,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And most humble Servant,

The AUTHOR.

DEDICATION

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values, or a submission submitted in it's
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are submitted the weak but honest efforts
of the year 1743, 1753, and 1763, we
may collect into one view every thing
My object is to illustrate the following facts:
That the trade and the natural government
of that country is inconsistent of obedience
That our own misconduct dissolved both.
That perseverance in our measures is
unavoidable. And

That we return to the original principles
the existence of the company, and that of the
trade to this nation is in danger of being
annihilated.

It is admitted by every writer that our
troubles and miseries are all about the year
1750, and that the trade and
the company's affairs is the
one which has been brought in contradiction
to the year 1743. At this time (1743)
though

T H E

ORIGIN and CAUSE, &c.

BY retrospection into our affairs in the years 1743, 1753, and 1763, we may collect into one view every thing that can illustrate the following facts:

That the trade and the natural government of that country are inseparable,

That our own misconduct dissolved both.

That perseverance in our measures perpetuates them, And,

That till we return to our original principles, the existence of the company, and fate of the trade to this nation, is in danger of being annihilated.

It is admitted by every writer, that our troubles did not commence till about the year 1756, therefore, in 1743, the tranquil and flourishing state of the company's affairs is the best evidence that can be brought in contradistinction to later times. At this æra (1743)

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though

though the Phirmaund had been abused, by their tacit indulgence to their servants, yet, not having gained the unbounded height it did afterwards, the country government was easily reconciled, all our exports were sold to the native merchants, who resided within our walls, to very great advantage; and the contracts being made with them for our homeward investment, there was a reciprocal interest that attached the natives to us. No imprudent use could be made of these contracts to embroil us with the government, there was no risque of failure of the manufacturers, no danger of any infringement of the laws, nor any hazard of the company's property. In our courts of Zemindary and Cutcherie (courts of justice) a native of distinction and property presided with one of our council, and the markets were regulated by them; then the greatest plenitude prevailed; and the utmost harmony between us and the natives, whose welfare was so blendid with ours, that it secured to us the earliest intelligence, and rendered facile all compromises with the Nabobs. By departing from this plan, as we shall see in the year 1752, we broke the grand link that united us, and drew on us the irreconcilable resentment of government.

From

From the year 1746, to this time (1752) there was a succession of no less than five or six governors at Bengal, owing to parties at home; and it was not the merit of the man there, but the weight of his friend here, that filled the vacancy. The pernicious consequence of such influence is no where stronger than in the present case. An unsettled and weak government submits to the most destructive measures. In the year 1751 or 1752, there was a total subversion of every thing, from what it was from our first establishment to that time. Mr. Hollwell went out perpetual Zemindar, and removed for ever, from our courts of justice, any native presiding, though it had been wove in with the constitution, took the management of the Bazars, and rack-rented them, and, by an order from home, at almost the same time the contractors (called Dadney Merchants) were entirely laid aside, and Go-masters sent up into the country to purchase the company's investment for Europe.

From hence spring all our disorders; and it is from hence that materials collected to cover the fountain, which not bursting forth at once, the minuter passages were seized on to strike

with greater surprize the violence that followed; exculpate themselves, and ascribe all to the restless disposition of the Nabob.

I will throw every light on it the subject deserves, and, I believe, to the conviction of every one, (even the directors and their servants, if they are really ignorant) that they derived all their misfortunes from these two sources, the Zemindary and Dadney. The voluminous letters published by Mr. Hollwell, shew the contests the first brought into council, the scarcity and advanced prices of every necessary of life, particularly rice, that immediately followed, was a further consequence. The company's sales at the same time felt the effects, there being few or no real purchasers, (the servants as yet, not venturing to appear) the measures of the Go-masters, breaking through the practice of the Dadney, at the Arungs, and being, in fact, no other than a door to shift the whole trade from the natives into the hands of their servants; These were accompanied with the persecution of Meteor, the black Zemindar, and soon after Omichund, the most considerable merchant amongst them. By these means the

the natives were alienated from us, as their dependance on us was no more, and every day served to convince them, our government would be more insupportable than their own. I cannot resist here mentioning a small novelty introduced at this time, as I know it gave great disgust to the natives: An order was issued that no black man should pass the fort in his palamkin. Trifling as this may appear, it cherished and strengthened resentment; it was weak and impolitic, and rendered them soon after the subject of ridicule, as they suffered the troops of Cojec Wazeed, the Phousdar of Hughly, to possess the Fort, and incamp close under the walls.

So weak, so necessitous, and so hungry a government prevailed at this time, 1753, that all credit was totally lost; the patience of the natives made them suffer a great deal, but when repeated folly brought the settlement into danger, and oppressions began to multiply, their indignation could no longer be restrained.

Mr. Drake had protected Kissingdass, an officer of the Nabob's, and sent the Nabob's
Hircara

Hircara away with contempt; these two circumstances are dwelt on with great force, and indeed as the only reasons assigned for the violence of his attack: however, from some of their publications, this truth has escaped them, that a suspicion being held of Omichund's correspondence, he was seized and imprisoned, and his very haram broke into, in defence of which, his brother Hirjirn Mull lost his arm. All the injustice done to this man, from this time to his death, I will not enter into; it will suffice to say, that, possessed of great wealth, he was the staff on which all governors till this time rested; his correspondence was the most extensive, his advice and assistance the same (to others as well as governors) where he met desert; it was our interest to court his residence, and our security to have consulted his. But after the changes that had now taken place, and every confidence in our government lost, he was soon singled as an object for resentment. That he was the first cause of the Nabob's coming down, as some have insinuated, carries the fullest contradiction in the face of it, since his loss singly must have largely exceeded the English collectively. Imprisoned, plundered, and disgraced,

graced, it can be no wonder if at last he threw himself into the arms of the Nabob for relief. The abuse of the Duffusk, the conduct of the Go-masters, the indignity to the Nabob in the person of his Hircarra (for the fir-pau with which Kiffindass was clothed, after the capture of Calcutta, has a mystery that removes all impression other than that he was a spy) and breach of a contract with Cojee Wazeed, (on which every one is silent) were beyond a doubt the grounds of the Nabob's descent; but his inflexibility to the English, over every other European power, proves every argument that the injuries done the natives brought it with accelerated and accumulated force against us. Here I embrace the pleasure of recording an action that must forever silence, and cover, with confusion, the detractors of that unfortunate man Oumichund; after all his sufferings, after defrauding him by a fictitious treaty of near four hundred thousand pounds, this Mahometan gives the most glorious example of forgiveness at his death, bequeathing to the English a handsome legacy towards rebuilding the church. But, to return to the Nabob, in what does his wanton, cruel, and restless disposition appear?

pear? he is acquitted of design in the affair of the Black-hole, nor is he charged with any one act of severity afterwards. The treaty made was of our own forming, and ratified to our apparent satisfaction, which leads us to the recovery of the settlement; and it would have been happy if we had at the same time recovered from our error, dropped the Go-masters, restored the Dadney, and, if not totally forbid the Duffuck to their servants, have limited it according to their several stations. To call it an oversight at that time in the direction, is the most favourable construction that can be put on it; but to continue it at this time, after so long experience, and innumerable evidences of it's pernicious consequences, is, I confess, extraordinary, but not unaccountable. Our first success was glorious, and the treaty honorable; it was here we ought to have stopped; nor can the laboured compositions of all the writers defend the breach of it.

To have abided by it, had they not returned to their old system by the Dadney, would soon have provoked further troubles; but it
is

is plain their thoughts never adverted to this, there was nothing expressive to their satisfaction, in the article of restitution, and without a breach they must sit down as great paupers as before he came against the place. And here the comparison will apologize for the digression, that his Majesty's ships and troops might not be idle, they destroyed Angria for their own private benefit, and established a more formidable rival in the Moratta; so they have abused the power they were armed with here, to plunder and destroy this government and country, for the like infamous purposes, as will be seen; for no specific sum was mentioned for public or private restitution, other than as appeared by the Sircar books, nor was the claim determined by their losses, but their lusts. No one who has the least penetration and feeling, can read the various manœuvres to corrupt a court, and accomplish so diabolical a scheme to depose and murder the Nabob, divide his treasury, and reduce to slavery his successors and that country, without the utmost detestation. The faults of individuals often entail on a nation distress as well as reproach; their second victory made

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them rich, but has brought the Company
NOW to the verge of ruin.

The Duffucks and Go-masters from hence spread over the whole empire, and every series of violence followed by seizing on the Nabob's farms of salt, tobacco, and beetlenut, and now the Nabob sees himself, too late, but the shadow of what his predecessors had been. All unanimity at home being dissolved, on news of the first revolution, the leaders have ever since attended more to preserve their own authority and interest, than to the means of restoring the company's affairs. It was not for want of advice but judgment, that the company did not put a stop to free merchants going abroad: So that in the year 1763, they were so numerous in Bengal, that even the employ of Go-master was over done, and foreign commerce there was none; how this has been lost, shall be considered hereafter. The governor, and many of the council could see, and express dissatisfaction with the practice of the Go-masters, were sensible of all their violence, both against the government and natives, yet every one removed it from his own, so that though all were guilty, none were so, nor had any, the

virtue to resist the gains of so lawless a commerce: Indeed, the torrent was too great for a single person to stem, without going from hence armed with proper power: but surely it would have done honor to a governor, to have pointed out, and enforced the necessity in the directors to have prohibited it. No one step is defensible, after the first treaty with Suraja Dowla, and to such a dilemma are we now reduced, that all the power of wisdom, and virtue, are requisite to our aid. To accomplish all our views that can be interesting to Britain is reducible, to the government or preservation of our power there, our own honor, and the trade to this nation.

The first is the only difficult task: view it which way we will, it is beyond the reach of the company to effect, being now like a ship without a rudder, and it will equally be found ineligible to subject to Britain. It's distance from this country makes it different from all our other possessions: it is this circumstance that supports the necessity of continuing it an exclusive trade, and this circumstance, that it should be free from any military restraint; small ships might navigate, but small ships

would ruin their employers ; the security and advantage to government would not be equal in an open trade, and all Ships trading to those parts must be on a level, (i. e. size) with foreigners, or they must in time of war become a prey, or a great national expence for convoy. We have, as I have before observed, advanced too far, and great as the paradox may seem, yet it will be found true : That the French have gained by loosing, the Dutch by sitting still, and England ruined by her conquests, for the barrier was destroyed with the natural government. We have not only opened a way for ourselves, but every foreigner, residing in these parts ; the benefit of which they enjoy, while every expence is at our cost. A nominal Nabob is an absurdity that only a weak brain can think of supporting : He is already divested of the means of maintaining an army, and we, in fact, of doing it for him : should the Dutch or French, therefore, attempt any thing against him, whatever use may be made of his authority, the arms employed against them must be at our expence. As to our asserting the dominion, and totally laying aside the Nabob and all his officers, supposing

supposing their revenue would maintain an
 army to check the first attempts of foreigners,
 what does it not threaten to entail on this
 nation. Open as it seems to our embraces,
 should it be attempted, every power would soon
 be collected to extirpate us; the trade and re-
 venue there would both sink, and that now
 fertile country become a waste. Our situation
 at this crisis, is like that of Monsieur Lally,
 when he had made his breach in the walls
 of Madrafs, certain ruin to enter: but our
 retreat may be with dignity, and crowned with
 success. The national honor is stained by
 too long suffering the most scandalous depredations;
 yet near as we are advanced to the
 precipice of destruction, our safety is insured,
 if we have the wisdom not to be deluded by
 appearances. To be short, restore the natural
 government to it's full power and dignity,
 compel the company to their antient mode of
 trade; let a native resume his seat in our courts
 of justice; let the use of the distuck be limited
 under the severest penalty, let the number
 of subordinates be reduced, every English-
 man and European in our employ, called to
 the capitol, except the civil and military ne-
 cessary

cessary, let no more servants be employed through all our settlements, than are sufficient for the business, and forbid any to go farther into the country, or carry on by a native, or otherwise, any collusive trade, to the disturbance of government. This, and this only, will destroy the Hydra. Many such laws as these are necessary to the direction, every department in the company's affairs wants a re-vision, which I will in a future essay point out, but at present shall confine myself to the subject before me.

Measures of this kind will not be destroying, but raising a noble fabric to our fame, and which must be followed by all the prosperity that can attend trade; nay, preserving our dominion more than if we assumed it. By treaty the Nabob may be confined, made dependant and tributary, so as to enable us always to keep a force sufficient to reduce him, and bring to our treasury a surplus of at least 200,000l. per annum. Invested with all his prerogatives, he will be armed with power; according to the plan we might dictate to preserve our influence beyond other Europeans and

and hold the ballance of trade in our own hands.

After forming a plan on this model, a person of dignity, honour, spirit, and knowledge of India, should be sent out to see the full execution. Lord Clive's motions are in a sphere different from this, I believe every one will concur in thinking; Lord Pigot is to be preferred, who, I believe, has the honour and interest of his country and this company so much at heart, that he will easily be prevailed on to quit his retirement when so much glory must attend it. The tribute passing through the company's hands will still circulate there; the idea of shaking off his dependance has every argument against it, though only 1500 men are kept in garrison, which I will aver is sufficient; men of property will again come into our settlements, the treasure now secreted will be brought into use, the channels for trade and silver open again, the markets replenished with every necessary of life, our courts of justice resume their authority, and, what is of the first importance,

importance, the national honour raise with additional lustre.

To divert us from this, Lord Clive presents us with a rich picture of the fertility, wealth, and extensive empire before us, that, like another Canaan, opens to our possession, and with his own grandeur, dazzles us with the dignity of the piece. But has he not misled the government and the public so long, to escape the toils he finds himself entangled in, that at one time, with 8000 men he will pay the national debt, or adopt his plan, and he will bring three millions into the treasury every year more than now comes, to destroy, if reason possibly can, every visionary scheme of government our laws may, by re-admitting a native into our courts be sufficient, over those within our jurisdiction; but none but the original government and laws can preserve and restore the trade. The troubles have already advanced the prices of all the manufactures there, and almost annihilated the sales of our own. Had we the dominion as the noble lord contends for, trade, revenues, and the people would wholly leave us. He does not pretend to be a merchant, yet he should know

so much as this, that trade is the brightest jewel in a diadem. In so grand a plan trade should be the first principle considered: this he has not studied, and I will communicate what he is also a stranger to, at Surrat as well as at Bengal, by adopting such schemes, and grasping at empire: Trade the most substantial part is removed to Arabia, from whence we are excluded. The natives, both at Surrat and Bengal, by our repeated oppressions, were obliged to lay aside their maritime commerce, our own in those parts withered soon after, and hence the channels of silver from the gulphs, &c. were stopped. Troubles will naturally stop those by land, be the cause of hiding, looting, and removing a great deal. Some millions have been carried out of the country never to return again, what then can it avail, seeing in figures what cannot be realized. In the country there are no mines; but the trade would be such, if we would let it be uninterrupted in it's course. From what has been said above, nay, from what the noble Lord himself has said, it is very evident that our wresting the government from the Nabob, has too many difficulties attending it, and to think of

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preserving

preserving it by sending a king's governor to be a check on the company, will be equally dangerous. Let the Nabob be the collector, and he will have no difficulty of paying a sufficient tribute, but every measure should be taken, that nothing more is drawn from him.

Whatever step may be taken with the present servants abroad, it is the first thing necessary to prevent any further embarkations from hence; there are already, I believe, I may venture to say without exaggeration, six times more than are necessary; the employ for them will by this means be reduced, the country recover from it's oppressions, and all the evils by their collection at the capitol be removed.

It is here we must lay the foundation for government, justice, and trade; the plan is simple, and expeditious to be effected, and it cuts off every possibility of continuing or renewing their abuses.

The honor and interest of the British crown and kingdom are so deeply concerned in the prosperity of this trade, that nothing ought

to be omitted that can preserve it from the like accidents in future, I shall therefore mention one thing so necessary to this end, that unless adopted, will in time destroy all the rest: "That laws for the better government of the directors be collected," respecting the establishment now to be made.

In this place I must call the attention of the proprietary to an evil of as great magnitude as any in the power of the direction: I not only give what has been done, but what may be pursuing at this time, and will no doubt be continued, unless immediately put a stop to. Taking a man dismissed from the service abroad, with the strongest conviction of his guilt, into the direction, is most certainly not cleansing but corrupting the spring; suffering men to go out in the service again, who have added to their other crimes insult while abroad, and the most insolent public opposition at home. Can parties in the house or their virtues be stronger expressed, where adding crime to crime washes away the offence, and vote for vote turns one to plunder again abroad, the other at home. I shall mention one circum-

stance more, which, being somewhat concealed, does not appear so flagrant, but is not less so: The removing persons from one settlement to another is doubly injurious, as it is so not only to the servants, but materially so to the interest of the company, which every man may judge by placing himself a moment in that situation; but what must it be should a person be sent from hence, who having obtained one hasty fortune from the disorders, resigned to prevent being dismissed, and after wasting it by dissipation, and entering into the policies here, this single merit, should recommend him to supersede men un-impeached, either in their ability or veracity, and to a government perhaps he is totally a stranger, to get another fortune by as worthy means. The enormities in that part of the world has been so notorious, that in my opinion, the direction and service should be shut to them.

The whole is like the Augean stable; but we are not destitute of the means, if we have the will to cleanse it.

And

And first, I must observe, what I believe will not be denied me, that the welfare of this company and nation are inseparable, and therefore that every encouragement ought to be given to it. That heavy duties are next to a prohibition, and that as the risques and expenses are great, so ought and indeed must be the profits. On these principles then, the first disqualification should be a seat in parliament, or any other place under the crown.

2dly, Any director gambling in that stock.

3dly, The prevention of temporary voters.

4thly, Being concerned in speculations in tea, raw silk, or otherways.

5thly, Being concerned in a dock, or any thing belonging to a ship.

Last, though not the least, is to prevent in future, three or four men usurping the power of governing this great machine: fidelity too often bends to interest, and truth should always be the minister's guide: Experience is the best monitor.

Abroad !

Abroad! the succession to the chair should be fixed, the salaries of all the servants raised, no more military sent out further than to keep up 1500 men, officers included, and, a plan of oeconomy formed to reduce the expences,

The opinion of a respectable military officer, that 3000, or 4000 men, is sufficient to hold the government of the country, must be supposing us to have no more to contend with, than those we have had. In this case it is plain that half the number has done both in camp and garrison; but I believe 6000 would not do, if we should ever be drove into the fort, since that alone would require more for it's defence. On a peaceable plan, which is certainly our interest, this fort would be a perpetual heavy rent charge, on an active one, it is most likely to prove our ruin.

A very ingenious, sensible and honest writer in a series of letters to Lord North, has anticipated much of my intentions, and I should have wholly laid aside the thoughts of writing,

writing, could I have furnished him with these minutes, both I am satisfied proceed from the best of motives, the public good, and my sincere wishes are, that they may prove so.

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